

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CCO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USSS-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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USIA-15 ACDA-19 AID-20 OMB-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /181 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4823

DIA

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12296

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, US, IS, SY

SUBJECT: ARAB REACTIONS TO US POSITION ON ME SETTLEMENT

REF: BEIRUT 12105

1. SUMMARY: VIRTUALLY ALL PRO-WESTERN LEBANESE ARE DEEPLY DIS-
APPOINTED OVER USG DECISION RESUPPLY ISAREL WITHOUT
AT MINIMUM CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES. THEY FEAR USG WILL MISS UNIQUE
OPPORTUNITY BRING ABOUT LONG-RANGE SETTLEMENT OF
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ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE, THAT "PEACE-WINDOW" WILL CLOSE

BEFORE USG POLICY EVOLVES ENOUGH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
BRIEF OPENING. END SUMMARY.

2. SHOULD ISRAEL SUCCEED IN SMASHING EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN
ARMIES AND DRIVE EGYPTIANS FROM WEST BANK OF SUEZ
FOLLOWING DELIVERIES NEW AMERICAN ARMS, ALMOST ALL OF
OUR FRIENDS HERE FORESEE THREE PRINCIPAL REACTIONS IN
ARAB WORLD: A) SHARP DECREASE IN AMERICAN INFLUENCE,
INCREASE IN SOVIET INFLUENCE, FURTHER ACTIONS AGAINST
AMERICAN INTERESTS AND, IN SOME PLACES, AMERICAN CITIZENS;
B) LOSS OF INFLUENCE (AND PERHAPS EVEN THEIR POSITIONS
WHERE SADAT AND ASSAD CONCERNED) OF PRESENT GROUP OF
RELATIVELY MODERATE, PRAGMATIC ARAB RULERS WHO ESCHEW
IDEOLOGY, BASICALLY DO NOT SUPPORT FEDAYEEN, AND WHO
WOULD MUCH PREFER HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES
AND HONORABLE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL; THERE WOULD BE
CORRESPONDING RISE IN EXTREMISM/ANARCHY AS WELL AS ARAB
COMMUNISTS ON LEFT AND QADHAFI-TYPE RIGHTISTS, WHO WOULD
BE MUCH HARDER TO DEAL WITH; C) LEBANON WOULD BE DRAGGED
INTO THIS MAELSTROM, WITH FEDAYEEN AND ALL SORTS OF

EXTREMISTS TURNING AGAINST GOL AS WELL AS AMERICAN INTERESTS,
PERHAPS WITH SUPPORT OF VARIOUS ELEMENTS FROM OTHER ARAB
COUNTRIES UNHAPPY WITH LEBANON'S NON-INVOLVEMENT IN WAR;
INFLUENCE OF USSR HERE WOULD OBVIOUSLY JUMP UPWARD.

3. LEBANESE BELIEVE THAT TIME RUNNING OUT BUT THAT IT
NOT YET TOO LATE, PROVIDED USG MOVES VERY RAPIDLY. THEY
ALSO BELIEVE THAT OTHER ARAB LEADERS SHARE THIS VIEW, THAT
THEY BADLY WANT USG TO SOMEHOW START SERIOUS MOVEMENT TO-
WARD HONORABLE SETTLEMENT (I.E., OBTAIN SOME SORT OF
INITIAL CONCESSION FROM ISRAEL AND/OR TAKE PUBLIC POSITION
ON WHAT WE THINK GENERAL SHAPE OF SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE).
LEBANESE FEAR THAT SECRET NEGOTIATION BETWEEN USSR AND
US MAY DRAG ON SO LONG WITHOUT ANY VISIBLE RESULT THAT
ATMOSPHERE IN ARAB WORLD WOULD BECOME MUCH LESS RECEPTIVE
TO US EFFORTS FIND SETTLEMENT THAN IS PRESENTLY THE
CASE. MAJOR ISRAELI MILITARY SUCCESS WOULD, THEY BELIEVE,
MAKE THIS CERTAIN.

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4. JUDGING FROM OUR TALKS WITH EXPERIENCED, FRIENDLY LEBANESE
WE BELIEVE THAT ARAB REACTION TO OUR ARMS RESUPPLY HAS BEEN
MUTED BY TWO FACTORS: A) ARABS STILL BELIEVE THEY WINNING;
AND, B) ARAB LEADERS (NOTABLY SADAT AND ASSAD) STILL HOPING
THAT USG WILL BE WILLING AND ABLE PRODUCE REAL MOVEMENT
TOWARD SETTLEMENT, SPURRED ON BY PROSPECT OF RESTRICTIONS
ON OIL EXPORTS. HOWEVER, AS NOTED ABOVE, TIME IS RUNNING
OUT RAPIDLY, PARTICULARLY AS WORD SPREAD OF IDF SUCCESS

ON SUEZ FRONT. SHOULD ARABS BECOME CONVINCED,
RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THAT USG STALLING IN TALKS WITH
SOVS WHILE ISRAEL WINS MILITARY VICTORY, INFORMED LEBANESE
EXPECT ANT-AMERICAN REACTION TO CHANGE FROM SUCH REASONED
ACTIONS AS REDUCTION IN OIL IMPORTS, TO HIGHLY EMOTIONAL
ACTIONS SUCH AS HAVE CHARACTERIZED ARAB STATES IN PAST
(E.G., 1967 WHEN USG ALSO POPULARLY BELIEVED TO BE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ARAB MILITARY DEFEAT).
BUFFUM

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USINT CAIRO.

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